

VZCZCXRO0209  
RR RUEHGH  
DE RUEHUL #0551/01 0960729  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 060729Z APR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3907  
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC 8379  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5700  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 9488  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5607  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 0522  
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 4168  
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 3166  
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE 6386  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0786  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2143  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1193  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1809

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SEOUL 000551

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [KS](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: SEOUL - MEDIA REACTION

East Asia and Pacific: DPRK, missile launch  
-----

"NORTH KOREA'S MISSILE CAPACITY IS A SERIOUS THREAT"

Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized (04/06): "Even if North Korea failed to put a satellite into orbit, this launch demonstrated that North Korea's ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) capability has reached a certain level. ... North Korea already claimed to have succeeded in conducting a nuclear test in 2006... The ROK, by contrast, has given up its nuclear armament capability under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and is restrained by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) from developing missiles with the range of more than 300km and payload of more than 500kg. In other words, the strategic imbalance between the two Koreas in nuclear weapons and missiles is becoming increasingly serious. ... The ROKG, while preparing for sanctions against North Korea's missile launch and the ensuing negotiations with the North in the short term, should come up with a fundamental strategy how to protect national security under the threat of a North Korea armed with nuclear and long-range missile capabilities."

"NORTH KOREA SHOULD BE PUNISHED FOR ROCKET LAUNCH"

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized (04/06): "Since the U.S. is expressing willingness to have dialogue with North Korea, in addition to taking a tough response (to the rocket launch), the U.S. is expected to have contact with the North sometime. The problem is that even if bilateral talks are held between the two countries, no one knows when the North will get what it wants. In fact, most of the economic aid to the North comes from the ROK and Japan. ... The prospect for an accelerated arms race in North East Asia will also adversely affect North Korea. Japan, which has viewed the North's rocket launch as a good opportunity to build up its military power, will set out to increase its military spending, inevitably prompting China to respond in the same way... In this case, it is evident that China would not condone North Korea's position as much as it does now. The North's missile launch might lift its 'national status' but will ultimately not benefit the country."

"VIOLATING NORTH KOREA'S OWN INTERESTS"

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo editorialized (04/06): "North Korea will

not stop here. Now that it has a nuclear test and rocket launch under its belt, it is likely to move on to developing a nuclear warhead small enough to be carried by a missile. A second nuclear test is also probable. ... The first step in resolving the security threat triggered by Pyongyang's provocation is for the international community to reinforce the principle of 'no reward for bad behavior.' It is regrettable that China and Russia simply urged calm and controlled responses immediately after yesterday's launch without citing the provocation's violation of Resolution 1718. ... Their inept action could even invite further provocations by Pyongyang. The U.N. Security Council, which will hold a meeting today, must draft specific measures to make it clear to the North that its provocations will run counter to its interests. "

"NORTH KOREA SHOULD PAY THE PRICE FOR ROCKET LAUNCH"

Moderate Hankook Ilbo editorialized (04/06): "The international community needs to refrain from overreacting to the North's rocket launch. The international community should make sure that North Korea pays a price for its rocket launch while keeping the Six-Party Talks on track and continuing to pursue talks. North Korea's missile issue should be eventually resolved through dialogue and negotiations. Given this, it is noteworthy that President Obama reiterated that the Six-Party Talks, aside from the rocket launch, should be an important framework for denuclearizing and easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula and discussing other issues related to the Korean Peninsula. "

SEOUL 00000551 002 OF 002

"MINIMIZING AFTEREFFECTS OF NORTH KOREA'S LAUNCH"

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized (04/06): "There are also views that this launch should not be taken as an act of provocation by North Korea but rather be used as a catalyst for strengthening negotiations on (North Korea's) nuclear weapons and missiles. The unreasonable pursuit of sanctions in this situation could get us away from the original intention of containing a threat, making the situation much worse. Such a move might even undermine the goal of denuclearizing and building peace on the Korean Peninsula. North Korea's launch smacks strongly of an attempt to secure internal unity ahead of the first session of its 12th Supreme People's Assembly. This means that North Korea's system is so weak that its leaders feel they must use this launch to demonstrate their power to their people. An immoderate response from related nations could fan this feeling of crisis within North Korea's leadership and send the situation spinning in the wrong direction."

STEPHENS